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Let the purity and heroism disappear from a man's belief in God and he will find himself stolidly worshiping the wooden deity of a schoolman.

Dr. Henry Preserved Smith writes instructively as ever on "The Religion of the Prophets." President Southworth discusses with his customary breadth the ideal of a school of theology and seems to hint at a more important place being given to sociology taught by a live teacher inspired with a sense of the church's pentecostal obligations to her proletarian founder. Mr. Fish, of the Meadville Unitarian Church contributes an interesting sermon on "Atonement."

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#### IDEALISM AS A PRACTICAL CREED

In his recent lectures on philosophy and modern life delivered before the University of Sydney,<sup>1</sup> Professor Jones, of Glasgow, advocates the application of the principles of absolute idealism to the problems which confront the modern commonwealth in its effort after a larger measure of freedom. It is not when mere emancipation from the bonds of tradition has been achieved that true freedom exists, but only after morality has been so socialized and society so moralized that law and liberty coincide. For guidance toward this end a sound philosophy is needed. Good results followed from the practical application of Bentham's universalistic hedonism—a very imperfect ethical philosophy; much better results might be looked for from the use of idealism as a practical creed. Only the idealism of love, the consciousness of brotherhood, of unity amid differences, can furnish an adequate principle of conduct in national as in individual affairs.

But while idealism is offered as a practical hypothesis to be progressively verified by enduring the strain of a nation's practice, a theoretical proof is claimed as well. Implied in all the sciences, imaginatively presented in all great poetry, cherished as the faith of all true religion, idealism becomes explicit, real and certain knowledge only in philosophy, which finds the identity of the real and the rational to be the absolute postulate of all knowledge and all morality. Here the author exhibits that confusion of the possible with the real which is common to all dogmatic idealists—a confusion naturally following from the dogma of the unreality of time. It is true that in the cognitive and moral processes man makes *regulative* use of the ideals of complete knowledge and

<sup>1</sup> *Idealism as a Practical Creed*. By Henry Jones. Glasgow: Maclehose; New York: Macmillan, 1909. 299 pages. \$2.00.

perfect morality respectively. But instead of recognizing that, so far as logical inference is concerned, knowledge simply involves the *possibility* of rationalizing the existent, and morality the *possibility* of realizing the ideal, the idealist commonly assumes forthwith that complete knowledge and perfect morality *constitute* the only really existing world. The logical and moral difficulties of this position have often been pointed out. The author contends that the alleged bad moral consequences logically deducible from this absolute, idealistic optimism do not, as a matter of fact, follow; but may not this be because certain features of idealism do not enter into the *practical* creed even of idealists?

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The translation of Rudolf Eucken's *Problem of Human Life* into English<sup>2</sup> and its publication, handsomely printed and appropriately bound, is an event of first importance to the serious reader in America. This work was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1908. It is a type of book all too rare among us, and the attention it receives will serve to indicate the amount of genuine philosophic interest which recent discussion and improved facilities of instruction have awakened in intelligent circles of this country. For in it the author seeks a solution of the philosophic problem not by applying a catchy formula or by exploiting the "latest discovery" of natural science or sociology but by reviewing the history of human thought in so far as this has dealt with the ultimate problem of human life itself. And this historical survey, accompanied by intelligent interpretation and criticism, proves to be more than an introduction to the problem; it clearly indicates the nature of the solution toward which man is being driven by the irresistible force of his own intellectual development.

All students of contemporary thought know of Rudolf Eucken as the staunchest champion of idealism in Germany today. He bases his idealism upon historical rather than logical or ethical grounds. The achievements of humanity in developing a "spiritual life"—a community of intelligence in which the individuals pursue ends of universal worth in the intellectual, aesthetic and practical spheres—seem to him the best proof that spirit is the fundamental reality and is destined to subdue the material world to its own purposes. Philosophy he believes to be the fittest vehicle

<sup>2</sup> *The Problem of Human Life*. By Rudolf Eucken, professor of philosophy in the University of Jena. Translated from the German by Williston S. Hough and W. R. Boyce-Gibson. New York: Scribner, 1909. 582 pages.

for the articulate expression of this life of the spirit, "the champion and enforcer of the necessities of the spiritual life." Hence the history of philosophy is to a large degree a record of the development of the spiritual powers of mankind. In the study of Greek philosophy with which the book begins the author finds its chief characteristic to be its conviction of the power of the human soul—that "the origin and essence of activity lie within man himself; his own force must awaken the divinity of his nature and guide it to victory over his lower self." The second part of the book is devoted to a philosophic interpretation of Christian solution of the life-problem. Many readers will welcome a more thorough and sympathetic treatment of Christian principles than is to be found in the chapter on the mediaeval period in most histories of philosophy. In the teachings of Jesus the negative note is strongly sounded—that of sacrifice and renunciation as far as the world of immediate existence is concerned. But joined with this is a more convincing affirmation of the "living presence of a new world of independent and triumphant spirituality." Practically all modern thinkers before Kant are treated as belonging to the enlightenment. This period is dominated by an unqualified confidence in the power of man's natural reason—but reason abstractedly separated both from other human faculties and from the objective world. Hence while there was great intellectual advance it was accompanied by growing superficiality and formalism. In the reaction to the enlightenment begun by Kant and continued by the German idealists we find the human spirit attaining a larger view and a more adequate expression. Justice is done to the whole of human personality and this is seen in its relation to the Universal Spirit which is immanent in nature and in history. This movement represents the culmination of modern idealism "which sought to hold fast to the spiritual inwardness of the old view of life, but at the same time aimed at extending its range over the whole of human existence thereby raising it to a higher level." But during the whole of the modern period hostile forces have been at work seeking to divert man's attention from subjects of spiritual concern and fix it upon his material environment and the control of natural forces in the interest of his physical comfort and happiness. These forces, gaining strength, succeeded in dispossessing idealism from sovereignty over European thought by the middle of the nineteenth century. The second half of the last century was therefore dominated by a conquering realism which, as evolutionism, introduced new conception of nature and, as social democracy, demanded a regeneration of society. Against this movement idealism has as yet made little headway. Consequently our age, despite its great show of material prosperity and wonderful advance

in commerce and industry, is spiritually impoverished and pervaded by a profound feeling of unrest and sense of dissatisfaction. Man's inward life seems to have collapsed and he is on the point of abandoning his ideals. Either this must happen or there must come as the result of the present struggle and defeat a stronger and fuller assertion of the spiritual powers of man in a new idealism which shall not be the possession of the cultivated few but shall elevate and transform the whole of human society. A review of the past with its record of spiritual achievement leaves us confident that the human soul will again reassert itself and, on the ground gained by past victories, create an order in which its ideals shall find realization. For man's soul is the fundamental fact which must take precedence over all others.

One can scarcely read this work without having his enthusiasm aroused and his inspiration renewed. The idealist has been represented in recent philosophical literature as a sentimental dreamer who, lacking the courage to face the actual situation, seeks consolation in a vision of absolute perfection. Doubtless many have been misled into accepting this caricature for the reality, and to these this book will be a source of enlightenment. For Eucken's idealism is of the militant type, eager to enter into conflict with actual conditions and to demonstrate its power to transform them in the interest of man's highest welfare. The book should have a wide circulation.

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